CONSTITUTION

OF THE

GRAND AND SUBORDINATE ORDERS

OF THE

A. H. T. A.

OF MISSOURI

REVISED 1885

SPECTOR PRINT, PALMYRA.
1885

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PREFACE

I have under taken this book to spread the knowledge and history of the A. H. T. A. and inspire the reader to further research. The A. H. T. A. was by no means the only Anti Horse Theft society that existed. In Arkansas the A. H. T. A. division merged with the "Grand Order of the Independent Order of the Knights of the Horse" (An organization which was founded at Ash Flat, Crawford County, Ark., and incorporated in 1876.)

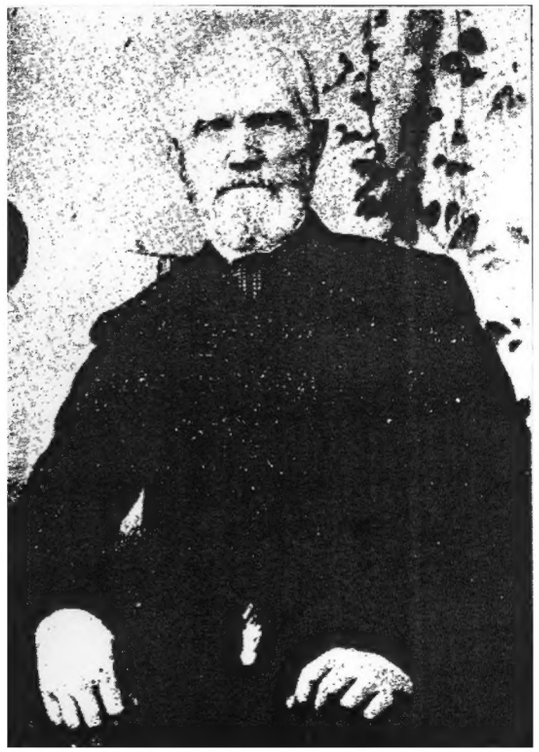
One hundred years ago the Anti-Horse Thief Association was a valuable deterrent to crime. In a time before modern communication between various jurisdictions and state borders the ability of the A. H. T. A. to rapidly disseminate information concerning stolen horses was a powerful deterrent to thieves.

The A. H. T. A. was empowered with the right to arrest in many jurisdictions. The total cooperation between distant lodges and the fact that the value of the property stolen was inconsequential, if the property belonged to an A. H. T. A member. The organization's total resources of manpower and finance were at the pursuing posse's disposal. The A. H. T. A. paid all expenses occurred in the recovery of a fellow Anti's stolen property no matter how long a time the recovery took or miles traveled.

In a way the A. H. T. A. was the super hero of the old west. The motto: "Protect the Innocent; Bring the Guilty to Justice", stirs the imagination just much as does "Hi-Ho Silver Away."

Today the A. H. T. A. has shrunk to a few lodges scattered across the central United States, a far cry from the mighty crime fighting organization it once was. The automobile and the police radio has render the A. H. T. A. services obsolete and its lodges impotent.

Scott Hensley



Major David McKee
Founder of the A. H. T. A.

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1885

ARTICLE I.

NAME AND JURISDICTION.

SEC 1. This body shall be known as the Grand Order of the Anti-Horse Thief Association for the State of Missouri and its jurisdiction. It shall be composed of representatives from Subordinate Orders, and the P. G. W. P. 's and W, P. 's of Subordinate Orders shall be members by virtue of their office, when present.

SEC. 2. This Grand Order shall have jurisdiction over all localities in which there are at present, or may be hereafter, Orders located. It is the supreme tribunal of the Order in the State, and without its sanction no Subordinate Order can exist. It possesses the sole right and power, in the manner hereinafter provided, of granting or suspending charters, of receiving appeals an redressing grievances arising in Orders, of originating and regulating the means of its own support, of deciding all questions arising out of this Constitution or Rules of Order, and of doing all other acts necessary to promote the interest of the Order, provided the same are not in violation of the laws of the land, or consent of the N. O.

ARTICLE II.

OF SESSIONS AND LOCATION.

SEC. 1. The Grand Order shall hold a regular annual session, commencing on the third Wednesday in October of each year, at 10 o'clock, A. M.
SEC. 2. A majority of the representatives of the Subordinate Orders present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction Of business.
SEC. 3. The Grand Order shall, during the session, determine by ballot the place of its next annual session, and a majority of all the votes cast shall be necessary to a choice.
SEC. 4. Each Subordinate Order shall be entitled to one representative for the first twelve .members, and one additional representative for each additional fifteen members.
SEC. 5. One delegate may cast the entire vote of his Order in the Grand Order.
SEC. 6. Any delegate may represent other Subordinate Orders than his own, in all cases as a regular delegate, provided he bear duly authenticated credentials from such Subordinate Orders as he may be called on to represent, but he shall be allowed to cast only one vote for each Subordinate Order except hrs own, that he may represent.
SEC. 7. No Grand officer or his deputy shall represent in the Grand Order any Sub-order than his own.

ARTICLE III.

OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS.

SEC. 1. The elective officers of the Grand Order shall be Grand Worthy President, Grand Worthy Vice-Presidents Grand Worthy Secretary, Grand Worthy Treasurer, and Grand Worthy Marshal.
SEC. 2. The officers shall be elected at the annual session of the Grand Order, and hold their offices for one year, or until others are elected and installed in their stead.

ARTICLE IV.

DUTIES OF OFFCERS.

SEC. 1. The G. W. P. shall preside at all sessions of the Grand Order, preserve order therein and enforce a due observance of the Constitution of this Grand Order. All questions of order and all decisions made by him shall be subject to an appeal from his decision to the Order, and it shall be his duty to put the question on all such appeals to the Order. He may appoint all officers pro tem., and committees not otherwise provided for. He shall give the casting vote in all cases of tie, except at the election of officers. He shall decide all questions of law which may be made to him from the decision of a W. P. of a Subordinate Order. He shall call meetings of the Order when business requires it.

SEC. 2. The G. W. V. P. shall act in the absence of the G. W. P. , and in the absence of both, the Grand Order shall elect a G. W. P. pro tem.

SEC. 3. The G. W. S. shall make and keep a true record of the proceedings of the Order at every session, and transmit immediately after the annual session to the Subordinate Orders copies thereof, receive all moneys, keep a just and correct account of the same, pay them over to the G. W. T. , and take his receipt therefore

He shall issue all necessary notices to subordinates and representatives, and perform such other duties as herein provided for or may be ordered by the Grand Order, and he shall conduct the correspondence of the Order.
SEC. 4. The G. W. T. shall receive all moneys from the hands of the G. W. S. , give his receipt for the same, and pay them out only on the warrant of the G. W. P. , countersigned by the G. W. S. He shall make a correct report at every annual meeting of the Grand Order of the amount of money in the treasury, and the amount expended since his last report. He shall give bond and security in the sum of one thousand dollars, to be approved by the G. W. P. , or the Grand Order, for the faithful performance of his duty.

SEC. 5. The G. W. M. shall be present at all sessions. He shall carry orders from the G. W. P. and G. W. S. , and perform all business pertaining to his office ; and he shall have power to appoint one or more deputies, as his duties may require.

ARTICLE V.

OFFENCES.

SEC, 1. Any Grand officer may be removed from his office by the Order for misconduct or neglect of duty; but he shall be entitled to a fair trial, and two-thirds of the votes of the representatives present shall be necessary for a removal.

SEC. 2. No officer shall officiate during the time occupied in his trial.
SEC. 3. Any representative may be expelled from his seat as such, for misconduct, upon the vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting, after a copy of the resolution of expulsion shall have been served upon him.

ARTICLE VI.

REVENUE.

SEC. 1 The revenue of this Grand Order shall be raised for the purpose of defraying the necessary expenses thereof, and shall be derived from charter fees, donations, and assessments, if necessary, of the Subordinate Orders.
SEC. 2. The fee for a charter to organize a new Order, with the necessary papers, shall be five dollars, the money to accompany the application.
SEC. 3. All Subordinate Orders failing to be represented in the Grand Order shall pay five dollars for secret work for ensuing year.
SEC. 4. Each Subordinate Order not represented at the annual meeting of the Grand Order shall be notified of its non-attendance by the G. W. S. , and if it fail to apply to G. W. P. for the secret work within the year, its charter shall be considered surrendered, and upon proper petition it may be granted a new charter.

ARTICLE VII.

CHARTERS.

SEC. 1. On the written application of twelve or more men of good standing in the community, asking for a charter to organize a new Order, the Grand Order, or the G. W. P. during the recess, may grant the same, and such Order shall receive its charter and the necessary instruction from the G. W. P.,i or a member specially deputed ; but no Subordinate Order shall be organized with less than seven persons named in the charter, and that no names shall be substituted or added to the original charter members at the time of organizing; all necessary expenses, if any, of the officer or member to be borne by the Order so formed.
SEC. 2. No person but the G. W. P. , or his deputy, or the W. P. of a Subordinate Order, is allowed to instruct in the unwritten work, except in the regular meetings of the Order.
SEC. 3. The W. P. of each Subordinate Order shall administer an obligation of secrecy to each member on initiation; said obligation also to be administered by the G. W. P. , or his deputy, to all charter members on organization, after the following form

OBLIGATION.

You [and each of you] do solemnly swear [or affirm] that you make application for membership in Subordinate Order No. through pure motives, and that as a member thereof you will keep inviolate and secret all signs and pass-words that are, or should be, kept secret for the good of the Order. That you will not black-ball a candidate through personal or political motives. You further promise and swear that you will not cheat, wrong or defraud a member of this Order, or allow any other person to do so if in your power to prevent. So help you God.

ARTICLE VIII.

FEES FOR SERVICES.

SEC. 1. The Subordinate Orders shall assist one another in pursuing and prosecuting thieves, and any service rendered by one Subordinate Order for another, the Order for which said service was performed shall pay a reasonable compensation therefor.

ARTICLE IX.

OFFICERS' FEES.

SEC. 1. The G. W. P., G. W. S., G. W. M., and all deputy G. W. P. 's shall receive one dollar per day for actual service performed in vacation of session and all incidental expenses.

ARTICLE X.

BOOKS, PAPERS, &C.

SEC. 1. All books, papers, and the seal of the Grand Order shall be kept by the G. W. S. , and by him turned over to his successor in office. He shall fill all charters.

ARTICLE XI.

STANDING COMMITTEES.

SEC. 1. The G. W. P. shall appoint the following committees : A committee on Finance, on Grievance, and on Constitution.

ARTICLE XII.

BLACK BOOK.

SEC. 1. It shall be the duty of each Subordinate Order to keep a black book, for the purpose of recording the names and residences of all suspicious characters, known criminals and rejected candidates, and each Subordinate Order shall furnish a copy of such person or persons to each Subordinate Order in that jurisdiction.
SEC. 2. It shall be the duty of the W. S, to report all such suspected persons and rejected candidates to the G. W. S. of the Grand Order, but no list of rejected candidates shall be published.

ARTICLE XIII.

DESCRIPTION OF STOCK.

SEC. 1. It shall be the duty of all members of Subordinate Orders to furnish a minute description of all horses and mules owned by them, to the G. W. S. of this Order.
SEC. 2. It shall be the duty of the W. S. to record all descriptions of stock in a book kept for that purpose.

ARTICLE XIV.

DIMITTED MEMBERS.

SEC. 1. Any member of this Order may, by written application, dimit from a Subordinate Order, and his rights as a member of the Sub-Order from which he dimits shall hold good, provided he shall become a member of some other Sub-Order within this jurisdiction within forty days from the date of such dimit

SEC. 2. Such dimit shall be granted by a, vote of the majority of the members present at a regular meeting of said Sub-Order.

ARTICLE XV.

AMENDMENTS.

SEC. 1. No alteration or amendment to this Constitution, or to the Constitution of Subordinate Orders, shall be made without the concurrence of this Order, and no By-Laws shall be adopted by the Subordinate Orders that conflict with the Constitution of the Grand Order or N. O.

ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR G. O.

1. Appointing Committee on Credentials.
2. Report of Committee on Credentials
3. Reading Minutes.
4. Appointment of Committees.
5. Appeals of Subordinate Orders.
6. Report of Officers.
7. Miscellaneous Business.
8. Election of Officers.

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FORM OF CREDENTIALS.

We hereby certify that at a regular meeting of A. T. A., held on Subordinate Order No....., A. H. T. A., held on the... .. day of....., 188....., Bro..... at the meeting of ..... and Bro..... were chosen delegates to represent said Subordinate Order at the meeting of the Grand Order A. H. T. A., to be held at …..... commencing on the.....day of.... 188.... Number of members …...

….....W. P.
….....W. Sec.

FORM OF PETITION.

We, the following named citizens of... ...Township, ...County, State of …...., hereby make application to the G. W. P. of.... ..for charter to organize a Subordinate Order of the A. H. T. A., to be located at. ..... P. O.....
(Signed) Names

FORM OF PETITION.

To the G. W. P. and Members of Subordinate Order No....., A. H. T. A. : Having a favorable opinion of your Association, I wish to become a member, if found worthy. My age is.....years. Occupation.. ……..... Residence. ……..
I have not been expelled or rejected by any other Order of A. H. T. A.
(Signed) ……..

FORM OF DIMIT.

This is to certify that Bro. ……. has been a member of Subordinate Order No..... A. H. T. A. , and upon his own application is granted this Dimit, he being free from all charges on the books of said Order, financially or otherwise.
[Seal.] (Signed) ……..... W. P.

CONSTITUTION

OF

SUBORDINATE ORDERS.

ARTICLE I.

OFFICERS.

SEC. 1. The elective officers of a Subordinate Order shall consist of a Worthy President, Worthy Vice President, Worthy Secretary, Worthy Financial Secretary, Worthy Treasurer, Worthy Marshal, and Investigating Committee, who shall be elected annually.
SEC. 2. The Pursuing Committee shall be appointed by the W. P. every six months.
SEC. 3. The above officers may be suspended from office upon charge and proof of malfeasance.
SEC. 4. The Subordinate Orders shall hold a regular meeting in each month.

ARTICLE II.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

SEC. 1. It shall be the duty of the W. P. to preside at all meetings and preserve order therein, and give the casting vote in all cases of a tie, except at the election of officers. He shall enforce a due observance of the Constitution of the Grand Order and Subordinate Orders, and shall have power to call meetings whenever he shall deem it necessary, draw warrants on the Treasurer for expenses and appropriations as the Order may direct, draw from the treasury money to defray the expenses of the Pursuing Committee without waiting for a vote of the Order.

He shall have control of the Pursuing Committee, and when he has received information of the stealing of a horse, or any stealing whatever, from a member of this Order, he shall furnish a description of the stolen property, and of the thief, if known, to the Pursuing Committee, and direct the routes to pursue. He may call as many members of this committee as he thinks necessary.
SEC. 2. The W. V. P. shall preside in the absence of the W. P.
SEC. 3. The W. S. shall make and keep a correct account of the proceedings of the Order at all meetings. He shall conduct the correspondence of the Order.
SEC. 4. The W. F. S. shall keep a correct account with each member of the Order, collect all dues, fees, and other moneys belonging to the Order, and pay them over to the W. T. , taking his receipt therefor.
SEC. 5. The W. T. shall receive all moneys from the W. F. S. belonging to the Order, give him his receipt for the same, and pay them out only on the warrant of the W. P. He shall make a correct report every three months of the amount expended since the last report. He shall give bond and security in the sum of two hundred dollars, to be approved by the W. P. and the Order, for a faithful performance of his duty.
SEC. 6. The W. M. shall be present at all meetings of the Order, and carry all messages from the W. P. to other officers and members of the Order, also such information as the W. P. or W. S. may direct. He shall, as soon as directed by the W. P.. give notice. personally or in writing, of called meetings : he may call as many deputies as he may think necessary ; he shall be allowed a reasonable compensation for his services, if faithfully performed.

ARTICLE III.

COMMITTEES.

SEC. 1. The Investigating Committee shall consist of five members of this Order. It shall be their duty, when a person or persons have been arrested and handed over to them, charged with stealing or any other violation of the criminal law, to examine the case, and if they find sufficient evidence to found a prosecution, they shall hand the person or persons over to the civil authorities ; said committee to attend personally to the prosecution of his or her case, and having the means and influence of the Order, they shall have power to call legal advice, if necessary.
SEC. 2. The Pursuing Committee shall consist of two separate and distinct committees, and shall be designated as Nos. 1 and 2.
SEC. 3. Committee No. 1 shall consist of two or more members, who shall be appointed by the W. P. It shall be their duty, when directed by the W. P. , to hunt in pairs two days diligently for the trail, but if sooner found, one of the party shall immediately report to the W. P. , and the other pursue on the trail.
SEC. 4. The Pursuing Committee No. 3 shall consist of the owner of the stolen property and two other members (and more if necessary), selected by the W. P. , whose duty it shall be to pursue the thief after his route is discovered, and as long as any trace of the thief can be found ; and if caught, it shall be their duty to hand him over to the Investigating Committee.

ARTICLE IV.

RAISING FUNDS.

SEC. 1. This Order shall have power to levy am ad valorem tax on all personal property of each member, to defray any expenses incurred by any emergency.

ARTICLE V.

APPICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

SEC. 1. Application for membership must be made at a regular meeting ; be referred to a committee of three, and lie over one month before being balloted on.
SEC. 2. No Subordinate Order shall act on the petition of a person in the jurisdiction of another Order, without the consent of said Order.

ARTICLE VI.

BALLOTTNG FOR CANDIDATES

SEC. i. All votes for initiation and receiving dimited members shall be by ball ballot, and every member shall vote, except when excused by the W. P.
SEC. 2. No person shall become a member of this Order until he is twenty-one years old, and receives the unanimous vote of all members present at a regular meeting.

ARTICLE VII

EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

SEC. l. This Order shall have power to exclude any members for crime, or conduct unbecoming an Anti, but no member shall be debarred from a fair and impartial trial.
SEC. 2. Any member of this Order divulging any of the secret work or business transactions of the Order, shall, on conviction, be suspended or expelled by a two-thirds vote of the Order.

ARTICLE VIII.

PROTECTION TO WIDOWS,

SEC. l. The widow of any member of this Order shall have her property protected the same us her husband would have had, had he lived and that any Subordinate Order may protect the property of any woman if she will pay the dues and assessments the same as the members.

BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE 1. The regular meeting of this Order shall be held on or before the moon of each month, at candle lighting.
ART. 2, Any person wishing to become a member of this Order, shall make application to some member thereof, and at the next meeting the vote shall be taken for the admission or rejection of such applicant,
ART. 3. No person shall become a member of this Order until he is twenty-one years old, and receives the unanimous vote of all present at a regular meeting.
ART. 4. Any member who proposes the name of any person for membership, shall inform him of his election or rejection.
ART. 5. No person shall be initiated until his initiation fees are paid.
ART. 6. Any person divulging any transactions of the Order, outside of the Order, shall be fined one dollar and be subject to expulsion,
ART, 7. Each person on becoming a member of this Order shall pay an initiation fee of ….....
ART. 8. No person who is not a member of this or a Subordinate Order shall be admitted into our meetings.
ART. 9. It shall be the duty of the President to grant a certificate of membership to any worthy member who desires it.
ART. 10. The President may detail members to do riding or carry orders or messages pertaining to the Order.
ARM. 11, No person who has been or may be rejected, shall become a member of this Order until such objection is removed.
ART. 12. Any person giving information that his property has been stolen, and it afterwards appear that it only strayed, the owner shall pay cost of hunting said property,
ART. 13. Each person serving on detail, or committee, shall receive one dollar per day and have all reasonable expenses paid.
ART. 14. Any member three months in arrears shall be deprived of the benefit of the Order, and six months in arrears, shall be dropped from the roll.
ART. 15. The election of officers shall be held not less than five days nor more than forty days next previous to the meeting of the Grand Order.
ART. 16. These By-Laws shall be read at each regular meeting, so that no member can plead ignorance of them.
ART, 17. These By-Laws may be altered or amended by the unanimous vote of the members present, notice having been given in writing, setting forth the proposed amendment, one month previous to the time the vote is to be taken,

ORDER OF BUSINESS

FOR SUBORDINATE ORDERS

1. Taking up the pass.
2. Appointing O. G.
3. Reading minutes.
4. Applications for membership,
5. Report of committee on applications,
6. Balloting for candidates.
7. Initiation of candidates,
8. Report of special committees
9. Report of standing committees:
10. Unfinished business,
11. New business
12. Appointing committees,
13. Reading By-Laws.
14, Good of the order,

Proof